Title: Treating of Gosikhurd Irrigation project as a national project and to provide financial assistance to the State Government

SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR (NAGPUR): Sir, there is a very important irrigation project which has been pending execution for over 15 years in Vidarbha region. The foundation for the Gosikhurd Irrigation project, known as Indira Sagar Dam, covered under the Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme, was laid on 22.4.1988 by our late Prime Minister, Shri Rajiv Gandhiji. Necessary provision for its implementation was made in the Sixth Five-Year Plan. The original cost of this project was estimated to be Rs. 461.19 crore, which is now estimated Rs. 2,344.23 crore though only 16 per cent work has been done. Looking to the present pace of its progress, there is every likelihood of further cost escalation.

It was conceived to provide irrigation facilities for over 10 lakh acres of land besides solving the drinking water problem of many villages and turning the East Vidarbha region to other developmental activities. The achievement of the potential upto the Ninth Plan is however quite insignificant. Even the land owners who became destitute consequent upon the acquisition of their land have not been paid proper compensation and rehabilitated and they are greatly agitated.

The immediate implementation of this irrigation project is the absolute necessity for this backward Vidarbha region and all assistance needs to be given to the Government of Maharashtra so as to ensure its prompt execution. I would urge upon the Government to treat this long pending project as a national project and to provide the required financial assistance to the State Government in the matter.